ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
for the year ended December 31st, 1936.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH LIBRARY

To Thetford Urban District Council.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for 1936 as follows:—

SECTION A.—STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

The Area of the District is 7,069 acres and is partly Rural and partly Urban.

The Registrar-General's estimate of the population for 1936 is 3,931.

The number of inhabited houses in the area is 1257.

The Rateable value is £15,708 and the estimated yield of a penny rate is £60 19s. 11d.

The Rural part of the Area provides occupation in Agriculture and general estate work. During this year the building of the new Aerodromes in the district has provided a large amount of work, especially among the skilled or semi-skilled men. Sugar-beet growing and Forestry work continue to employ seasonal labour and relieve unemployment. In the Urban District the main occupations are Motor Engineering, Patent Pulp Manufacturing, Malting, Chemical Manure Manufacturing, Fruit Canning and general trading. A small factory for the preparation and manufacture of Coffee has been started in the Town and gives new employment.

Vital Statistics.

		Total.	M.	F.	
Live Births	Legitimate	55	23	32	Birth Rate per 1,000 of Estimated Population 15.
	Illegitimate	4	2	2	
Still Births	... ...	3	1	2	Rate per 1,000 50.8.
Deaths	... ...	55	32	23	Death Rate per 1,000 of Estimated Population 13.9.

		Rate per 1,000 births.
Deaths from Puerperal causes		
Puerperal Sepsis	Nil.	Nil.
Other Puerperal causes	Nil.	Nil.
Total	Nil.	Nil.

Death Rate of Infants of under one year:—	
All Infants per 1,000 live births	Nil.
Deaths from Cancer	6.
,, ,, Measles	Nil.
,, ,, Whooping Cough	Nil.
,, ,, Diarrhœa (under 2 years)	Nil.

Of the 55 deaths registered thirty were over 70, seven over 80, and one over 90 years of age.

The principle causes of death were Heart Disease 13, Diseases of the Lungs 11, Cancer 6, Cerebral Hæmorrhage 4, Tuberculosis 4, Violence 2.

The mild winter no doubt affected the lowering of the Death Rate this year but the raising of the Birth Rate is less easy to explain as to my knowledge 10 miscarriages occurred and probably there were more which I did not know of. In the fight against Maternal Mortality I consider that the notification of miscarriages and the proper after treatment is a very important matter and if properly tackled may have a very considerable effect on this Maternal Mortality. Under our Maternity Association we have for many years insisted that only a trained nurse under a doctor may attend these cases and the Association guarantees not only the Nurse's fee but also the fee for the handy-woman in necessitous cases so that everything may be done to ensure that the woman makes a complete recovery. In any case of Sepsis or doubtful Sepsis the woman is encouraged to take advantage of the Glycerine treatment clinic which is provided free of charge and I am quite convinced that this treatment sterilises the womb and relieves it from the danger of lurking Sepsis in subsequent confinements.

I am glad to say that the facilities provided have been fully taken advantage of by the women in your District and while not prepared to dogmatise on such an important question I think the statistics since the Maternal Mortality figure was recorded indicate we have been very fortunate in our town or that the work done has been justified. During the last six years 395 babies have been born and only one mother has died as the result of her confinement.. This gives a Maternal Mortality of .29 per cent as against a Maternal Mortality for England and Wales of about 4 per cent. I may say that the mother who died had a history of a previous mildly Septic Confinement in a London Hospital and in her fatal confinement here had no chance at all as she was infected throughout after the 3rd day of an absolutely normal confinement.

I would also like to draw your attention to the fact that for the 2nd year in succession you have a nil Infantile Mortality. I think this very excellent return must redound to the credit of your Infant Welfare Association who have put in so much good work for the welfare of the Infants in the Town. No doubt there will be deaths in the future under one year as it is the commonest age for death but to have escaped a death for 2 years means that the workers in the cause have achieved an excellent result. I would point out that as late as 1925 the Infantile Death Rate was 106 per 1000 births. I would also like to draw your attention to the lowering of the Cancer Death Rate. Last year 19 deaths from Cancer occurred in the Area but this year there are only 6, which is low for the District over the last 20 years. I think it quite does away with the feeling that has been prevalent that Thetford was a Cancer Area. The lowest Cancer Death Rate—4 cases—was recorded in 1928.

SECTION B.—GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

1. (i). Personnel.

Medical Officer of Health, part time, M.D., D.P.H., who is also Medical Officer to the Maternity and Child Welfare Association.

Sanitary Inspector, part time, Royal Sanitary Institute.

Health Visitor, who also acts as Nurse to the Infant Welfare Clinic; C.M.B., Royal Sanitary Institute Health Visitor's Examination, Royal Sanitary Institute Maternity and Child Welfare Certificate.

District Nurse, State Registered Nurse, C.M.B.

(ii). (a). Laboratory Facilities.

No change has been made during the year. The scheme has worked efficiently.

(b). Ambulance Facilities.

No change has been made during the year but there is a plan to provide a Motor Ambulance for the District and a St. John's Ambulance Division is being formed to take charge of the running of it. The Hand Ambulance is available as in previous years.

(c). Nursing in the Home.

This work has been carried on as usual by Nurse Ramshaw under the Nursing Federation. Her salary is provided by donations and annual subscriptions from patients.

(d). Treatment Centres and Clinics.

Maternity and Child Welfare.

This work has been carried on as in former years by the Thetford and District Maternity and Child Welfare Association which is responsible for the running of the various Clinics and providing personnel. The passing of the Midwives Act, 1936, made it necessary for the Association to make preparation for its working. The main difficulty lay in the fact that Nurse Rudland, although a highly trained and efficient Nurse, was not certified and so would have to retire from Midwifery Practice and that Nurse Carr was unable owing to advancing years and infirmity to take on the whole of the Town. Many meetings took place with the County Medical Officer of Health and ultimately it was decided to fall in with the County Scheme under which the Norfolk Nursing Federation would provide a whole-time midwife for the Town and that Nurse Carr would retire under the compensation scheme of the Act. Meantime the two Nurses have been carrying on the work as usual until such time as a Nurse is provided.

During this year it was necessary to make application to the County Council for the block grant for the next five years. Again many meetings with the County Medical Officer of Health and the County representatives were held and eventually a case was made out which it was felt justified the Association in applying for an increase of £114 on the previous grant of £100. The matter was sympathetically considered by the County Council but they felt that they would only be justified in increasing the grant by £80 the rest to be made up by the Association. The main items justifying the increase were to bring the Health Visitor's salary up to the proper standard and to provide for her superannuation and to pay a salary to Dr. Lorimer for his work at the Glycerine Clinic.

Infant Welfare Centre.

The Centre has been open without interruption from Infectious Disease throughout the year. It has been well attended and is evidently appreciated.

The returns for the year are as follows:—

Total attendance of mothers	435
No. of Individual mothers	106
Average attendance of mothers per clinic	18.12
No. of children under 1 year who have attended	53
,, ,, 1—5 years	88
Total number of attendances by children ...	583
Average attendance of children per clinic ...	24
No. of visits in the home paid by the Nurse ...	2234
Free Milk supplied	391 gallons.

Ante-Natal Clinic.

This Clinic has been open once a month at the Hospital 31 patients attended and made 48 attendances. In addition the Nurses made 511 visits to patients in their homes.

Post-Natal Clinic.

Four cases attended this Clinic at the Hospital. I find that the patients prefer to have the examination made in their own homes. The Nurses made 36 visits for this purpose.

Dr. Lorimer's Glycerine Clinic.

This Clinic has been open throughout the year as required. 102 sessions were held and 125 treatments given.

Hospitals.

There has been no change in the Hospital service of the District. Owing to the generosity of a number of donors to the Cottage Hospital a new private ward and a children's ward have been provided and the kitchen premises entirely reorganised. These improvements have greatly increased the efficiency of the Institution.

2. Not applicable.

3. Midwifery and Maternity Services.

This work has been carried out by Thetford and District Maternity and Child Welfare Association as in former years and has worked smoothly.

Institutional Provision for Mothers and Children.

No change.

Infant Life Protection.

No change.

Orthopædic Treatment.

This is provided for under the County Council Scheme. The children attend the Clinic in Norwich and the treatment is supervised by the Orthopædic Nurse who visits the children in their homes.

4. Nursing Homes Registration Act, 1927.

This Act is administered by the County Council.

SECTION C.—SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF AREA.

1. (i). Water.

There has been no extension of the Public supply during the year. The supply in every way was satisfactory in quantity and quality. The sample sent the County Laboratories was reported on by the Analyst as follows:— "This water is of great purity both chemically and Bacteriologically and remarkably constant in character. It is of excellent quality for drinking and all the purposes of public supply."

(ii). Drainage and Sewerage.

There have been no alterations or extensions of the drainage and sewerage throughout the year.

2. Rivers and Streams.

No new action has been taken throughout the year.

3. (i). Closet Accommodation.

The only changes in this service have been the conversion of one vault to W.C., and 6 vaults to pail closets. There are now 285 W.C's., 562 pails and 427 privy vaults.

(ii). Public Cleansing.

The method of collection and disposal of refuse remain the same. The Melford Common dump is now almost full.

(iii). Sanitary Inspection of Area.

The report of your Sanitary Inspector is as follows:—

No. of inspections for general nuisances ...	337
No. of informal notices served	22
No. of statutory notices served	1
No. of nuisances abated as result of notices ...	22
No. in hand	1

(iv). Shops.

No action has been taken under the Shops Act, 1934, during the year.

(v). Smoke Abatement.

No action has been taken.

(vi). Swimming Baths.

The facilities provided by the Council remain the same as last year and are fully taken advantage of. A movement to improve the bath is on foot and may be carried out next year.

(vii).

No action taken.

4. Schools.

The Sanitary condition and water supply of the Schools is excellent. The health of the Schools was good and no closure for Infectious disease was necessary.

SECTION D.—HOUSING.

The statistics of work under the Housing Acts is as follows:—

1. Inspection of dwelling houses during the year:—

(1) (a). Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	58
(b). Number of inspections made for the purpose	146
(2) (a). Number of dwelling houses (included under sub-head (1) above which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations 1925	54
(b). Number of inspections made for the purpose	54
(3). Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	Nil
(4). Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	20

2. Remedy of defects during the year without Service of formal notices:—

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority, or their officers	20

3. Action under Statutory Powers during the year:—

(a). Proceedings under Sections 17, 18 and 23 of the Housing Act, 1930:—	
(1). Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	20
(2). Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices:—	
(a). By Owners	20
(b). By Local Authority in default of Owners	Nil
(b). Proceedings under Public Health Acts:—	
(1). Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	16
(2). Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:—	
(a). By Owners	16
(b). By Local Authority in default of Owners	Nil
(c). Proceedings under Sections 19 and 21 of the Housing Act, 1930:—	
(1). Number of dwelling houses in respect of which demolition orders were made ...	Nil
(2). Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of demolition orders ...	Nil
(d). Proceedings under Secton 20 of the Housing Act, 1930:—	
(1). Number of separate tenements or underground rooms, in respect of which closing orders were made	Nil
(2). Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which closing orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit	Nil

4. Housing Act, 1935 (Overcrowding).

(a). (i). Number of dwellings overcrowded at end of year	20
(ii). Number of families dwelling therein	20
(iii). Number of persons dwelling therein	137
(b). Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	Nil
(c). (i). Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during year	5
(ii). Number of persons concerned in such cases	32

(e). Council have scheme in hand for building 22 houses to abate the overcrowding.

SECTION E.—INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a). Milk Supply.

No change has been made in the methods of dealing with milk supply. Accredited milk is now available in the Town and is insisted on in the supply given by the Infant Welfare Association and to the children in Schools. 87 samples were taken and tested by lactometer. 5 samples were taken and sent to the School of Agriculture, Cambridge. The results were satisfactory.

(b). Meat and other foods.

The Slaughter houses and Bake houses have been regularly inspected and the Byelaws have been complied with. There are no underground bake houses.

(c). Adulteration.

This work is carried out by Inspectors sent out by the County Council. There have been no prosecutions.

(d). Chemical and Bacteriological Examination of Food.

No change.

(e). Nutrition.

No change. The supply of milk at the School has been continued and is being freely taken advantage of.

(f). Shell-fish.

Not applicable.

SECTION F.—PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

1. Not applicable.

2. There has been very little serious Infectious Disease during the year. A sharp outbreak of chicken-pox took place in the early part of the year. Influenza was short and sharp in type and not very widespread.

The methods of dealing with the control of infectious disease remain the same and have been successful in controlling the spread of the diseases.

The table of notification is as follows:—

Disease	Total cases notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Scarlet Fever	2	Nil.	Nil.
Pneumonia	4	1	3
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	Nil.	Nil.
Chicken-Pox	92	Nil.	Nil.

3. Cancer.

No change has been made in the method of dealing with Cancer during the year. The same facilities for Hospital and Radium treatment are provided. No propaganda has been carried out by the Local Authority as this is carried out by the County Council. The fall in the Cancer death-rate has been notified in paragraph A.

4. (a). Prevention of Blindness.

The facilities remain the same.

(b). Tuberculosis.

No action has been necessary under the Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations, 1925, or under Section 62 of the Public Health Act, 1925.

5. TUBERCULOSIS. New Cases of Mortality during 1936.

Age Periods.	New Cases.				Deaths.			
	Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.		Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1- 5 years	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
5-15 ,,	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
15-25 ,,	1	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
25-38 ,,	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
38-45 ,,	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
45-55 ,,	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals ...	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	0

In conclusion I would again record my appreciation of the work done by your Sanitary Inspector and my thanks to him for his help.

I am, Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,
ARCHD. OLIVER, M.D., D.P.H.,
Medical Officer of Health.

Thetford,
10th July, 1937.